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ABSTRACT

Selected works of African writers for use in junior college composition courses employing the research paper are annotated in this bibliography. The bibliography begins with annotations for an exemplary novel and three short plays, including insights for teaching. The second section offers citations, some of which are annotated, for Arab, White, Black, and colonial works from individual African countries. The third section includes selected references as adjuncts to the literature in the following areas: architecture, art, bibliography, biography/autobiography, criticism, drama, history, language, oral literature, and religion/philosophy. The bibliography concludes with descriptions of various organizations involved in the publication of African literature. (HTH)

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AFRICAN LITERATURE - ARAB, WHITE, BLACK, AND COLONIAL

Greta Avery Coger

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AFRICAN LITERATURE - ARAB, WHITE, BLACK, AND COLONIAL

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African Literature can be taught in Junior College English Composition II courses in which the research paper provides opportunity for expanded reading and understanding. Consider the following novels and plays.

THE DARK CHILD by Camara Laye (Farrar, Straus & Geroux, New York)

This autobiographical lyrical account tells of early childhood memories; of the sacred snake in his father's Guinean blacksmith's shop, of mystical ritual praise-singing and dancing, during the making of a woman's gold piece of jewelry, of visits to his grandmother during the Festival of Harvest for rice, of the school bully invited to his father's compound, of initiation into manhood, of attending Koran, French, and Technical schools, of friends' visits in his own hut, of the journey to the big city to stay with his strict Moslem uncle, and of his mother's excessive concern at each stage of his development.

Insights - Students found the book easy to read; names of trees, food, places, and clothing were easy to figure out. A few questions on each chapter, comparisons to life in the warm South in America, and a brief research paper on one aspect of life in Africa and America were done enthusiastically. Filmstrips, pictures, and artefacts

increased knowledge and interest. Coincident with my experience was the National Endowment for the Arts "African Artefacts Exhibit" in the Art Gallery of Northwest Mississippi Junior College; to augment my exhibit I gave four lectures on African Life, Art, and Literature. Research papers were excellent from even the weaker students. The College Library resources on Africa were satisfactory and easy to use due to a bibliography prepared for me by the librarian.

THREE SHORT PLAYS: THE SWAMP DWELLERS, THE TRIALS OF BROTHER JERO, and THE STRONG BREED by Wole Soyinka (Oxford University Press)

THE SWAMP DWELLERS shows the affection between Alu and Makur and their love for their twin sons; one is lost in the city but the other, Igwezu, does not ignore his family or the traditional land he had hoped would bear a crop. The beggar from the North now will not accept charity but seeks work and land. The Kadiye is blamed by Igwezu for ill luck in marriage, wealth, and land. While accusing the traditional priest of becoming fat on sacrifices, Igwezu shaves him closely. The Moslem beggar tends Igwezu's farm when Igwezu returns to the city.

Insights - Themes of rural-city differences, changes in traditional and Islamic respect for religion, generation gap, family life in rural villages versus the individualism in the city, loyalty--all are found. Students learn of plagues and floods, formalities of greetings and hospitality, and traditional customs.

THE TRIALS OF BROTHER JERO is the second play in THREE SHORT PLAYS by the Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka. Again good dramatic interest arises from the beach prophet Immaculate Velvet-hearted Jero admitting in his monologues that he does not intend to pay for his cape, that he used dancing girls to promote his church activities, that he lusts after women, that he keeps penitents coming by denying them satisfactions from spiritual comfort, and that he promises worldly success and advancement as well as the fear of God to dominate his spiritual customers. Amope is the trader to whom he owes money; however, Jero refuses permission to her husband to beat her until he finds out that his wife is camping on his doorstep until he pays for the cape. Chume finally realizes that Brother Jero is the debtor to his wife; he suspects his wife of unfaithfulness, and chases Jero on the beach. Jero converts a Minister of government to use him to validate Chume's "insanity."

Insights - Themes of appearance and reality, male-female relationships between unmarried and married individuals, personal inadequacies of leaders of religion and government while projecting a public image of strength, conflict of cultures in the hal-baked union of traditional and Christian religious practices, and religion as a business like trading--all of these are found. Students enjoy the flurry of the church service, the asides of Brother Jero about his lust and stinginess. Comparisons with the previous play make writing assignments full of illustrative material and of thoughtful assessments about character, morals, and religion. Students appreciate the humor and dramatic interest.

THE STRONG BREED presents the acceptance of the duty Eman was born to as one of the strong breed who carry the evils of the village to the river once a year. He had rejected his responsibility when his wife died in childbirth while delivering one of the strong breed. His odyssey included western education and his teaching at a strange village. His friends is a nurse who knows that traditional customary rituals will bring the wrath of the jealous village elders upon Eman; yet she cannot persuade him to leave until the New Year ritual is performed. Eman, realizing that the village idiot Ifada will be the victim carrier, is roused to run as carrier. The cunning of Oroge and Jaguna trap him on the way to the river; however, the villagers realize the elders' meanness and the dangers of not having the year's accumulation of evil symbollically unloaded in the river.

Insights - Themes of responsibility, maturity, leadership or the lack of it, efficacy of traditional rituals, alienation, and jealousy--all can be supported from the dramatic scenes. Students learn about traditional life, father-son relations, the problem of will overcoming sorrow at the loss of a wife, and the revelation of character in dialogue and action. Explanations of other rituals expand students' knowledge; comparisons to religious and social customs in America lead to well-illustrated compositions. Reading the plays aloud also provides opportunities for assessing reading abilities.

Egypt, Algeria, Morocco

Arab

Denys Johnson-Davies, ed. Egyptian Short Stories (Three Continents Press)

_____. Modern Arabic Short Stories (Three Continents Press)

Yusuf Idris. The Cheapest Nights (Three Continents Press)

Naguib Mahfouz. Midaq Alley (Three Continents Press)

Tayeh Salih. The Wedding of Zein (Three Continents Press)

_____. Season of Migration to the North (Heinemann)

David Woodman, comp. Egyptian One-Act Plays (American University in Cairo)

White

Laurence Durrell. Alexandria Quartet Novels.

Somali

White

Margaret Laurence. The Prophet's Camel-Bell (McClelland & Stewart)

Excellent account by a Canadian who lived in Somali and Ghana of the attempted communication among peoples of different cultures, languages, and religions. Recommended by the Somali government still which reprints it.

Somali continued,

B. W. Andrzejewski and I. M. Lewsi. Somali Poetry: An Introduction (OUP)

Recommended discussion and texts of traditional praise poetry, religious poetry, and modern songs.

Kenya

Arab

Muhammed Said Abdulla (Muhammed, Said Abdulla). The Well of Giningi (EALB)

W. H. Whiteley. Swahili Literature: African Prose (I.Oral) (OUP)

Black

Grace Akinye Ogot. Land Without Thunder. Short Stories (EAPH)

_____. The Promised Land (EAPH)

James Thiong'o Ngugi. Weep Not, Child (Collier)

_____. The River Between (Collier)

_____. A Grain of Wheat (Collier)

_____. Stories in Modern African Short Stories (Faber)

Indian

V. S. Naipaul. In a Free State (Knopf)

White

Baroness Blixen (Isak Dinesen). Out of Africa (Vintage)

_____. Shadows on the Grass (Vintage)

Kenya continued,

Under her pseudonyms of Isak Dinesen, the Baroness Blixen wrote a series of sketches of her life while she and her husband ran a coffee plantation in Kenya and of Europeans, Africans, and East Indians whom she knew.

Critique: She represents the best of Europe--cultured, unbigoted, generous in spirit, and unfortunately, c completely impractical businesswoman.

Use: Adult education class, English Composition II

Compare the African view of Europeans in any of Ngugi's novels.

The economics of subsistence agriculture in African societies can be contrasted with European plantation exports.

Elspeth Huxley. The Flame Trees of Thika.

Robert Ruark (American). Something of Value.

The British and European aristocrats who settled Kenya observed their own social mores; they had a great interest in safaris. Young British Peter McKenzie grew up with a Kikuyu companion, Kimani. When they are men, the Mau Mau revolt put each on a different side. The primitive naturalism of the final hunt--man for man--describes the forests and cities very well.

Critique: Kenyans felt that Europeans were portrayed as compulsively "native."

Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia)

S. Nyamfukudja. The Non-Believer's Journey (Heinemann)

Sam, a teacher in Salisbury, is not interested or involved in the war. As he goes to the funeral of his uncle (killed as an informer by guerillas), Sam explores his past, his family, and his own inner depths. He encounters a girl from his childhood. After the Shona elaborate funeral celebration Sam joins a men's secret meeting where he finds that he commits himself to smuggling medical supplies to the guerillas.

White

Doris Lessing. African Stories. Lessing is a superb writer.

_____. Going Home.

_____. The Grass Is Singing.

South Africa

Afrikaans and East Indian writers are discussed by O. R. Dathorne.

Black

Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu. Izithuko (Lovedale)

William Keorapetse Kgositsile. Spirits Unchained: Paeans (Broadside)

Thomas Mofolo. Chaka (OUP) See Donald Burness for criticism.

Ezekiel Mphahlele. The Wanderers (Macmillan) Exile in America, Europe, Africa.

Zimbabwe continued,

White

Athol Fugard. Three Port Elizabeth Plays (Viking)

Rider Haggard. King Solomon's Mines. 19th century white romanticism of blacks.

Alan Paton. Cry, The Beloved Country

_____. Too Late the Phalarope

_____. Tales From a Troubled Land

_____. Ah, But Your Land Is Beautiful (Scribner's, 1982)

Olive Schriener. The Story of and African Farm

Congo

White

Joseph Conrad. Heart of Darkness

Colin Turnbull. The Lonely African

An anthropologist's fictionalization of the conflict of values between African and western societies. He has prototypes: the man in the street, missionaries. His other works are very good.
Critique: Besides literature classes, Turnbull is useful for study in Political Science, Sociology, and History.

Nigeria

Black

T. M. Aluko. *One Man, One Wife* (Heinemann)

Elechi Amadi. *The Concubine* (Heinemann)

The good, beautiful, dignified, and respected Thuoma brings death and suffering to all of her husbands. She is still ruled by the gods.

Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* First missionaries disrupt Okonkwo's life.

_____. *No Longer at Ease* Rural-urban conflict of values.

_____. *Arrow of God* In-depth study of a chief and colonial officials.

_____. *A Man of the People* Political parties satirized.

Wole Soyinka. *Three Short Plays* (OUP) Family and religious themes.

_____. *Kongi's Harvest* (OUP Political satire.

_____. *The Interpreters* (Collier) Novel of urban professionals.

_____. Many other plays, novels, autobiographies, criticism, and poetry.

Tradition

J. P. Clark. *Ozidi* (OUP) Ijaw myth enacted.

Amos Tutuola. *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* Fantasy rooted in tradition.

_____. *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* Fantasy of an odyssey to other worlds.

White

Joyce Cary. *Aissa Saved*

_____. *Mister Johnson*

Nigeria continued,

Criticism

James Gibbs, ed. Critical Perspectives on Wole Soyinka (Three Continents)

Douglas Killam. The Novels of Chinua Achebe (Heinemann)

Margaret Laurence. Long Drums and Cannons (Macmillan)

Ghana

Black

Ama Ata Aidoo. No Sweetness Here (Doubleday Anchor)

Ayi Kwei Armah. The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born (Collier)

Kofi Awoonor. This Earth, My Brother (Doubleday)

White

David Godfrey. The New Ancestors (New Press)

Margaret Laurence. This Side Jordan (McClelland & Stewart)

Sierra Leone

Black

William Conton. The African (Heinemann) Creole been-to runs away to S. Africa.

Lenrie Peters. The Second Round (Heinemann) Psychiatrist in Freetown.

Sarif Easmon. The Burnt-Out Marriage Rural-city conflicts of values.

Sierra Leone, continued,

Davidson Nicol. The Truly Married Woman and Other Stories

Superbly written stories about clash of western Christianity and business values with traditional African life. Very funny. The depiction of a very ordinary District Commissioner's assistant going through the routines of writing reports about education, visiting schools, and giving dinner parties for visiting engineers. A been-to African who had ignored traditional beliefs two years previously to build a bridge had had to get sacrifices made to proceed with his work. The Britisher cannot get behond the usual observation made that Africans are frightened of the water juju. It is the Kenyan Britisher who is intrigued by the devil at Yolahun Bridge where he goes to see it but only sees a red-buck. The most interesting story is about the woman who gets married in western style only because the American evangelists's visit is to meet his converts. Then Ayo expected to have tea brought to her in the morning like a truly married woman instead of being an African wife who waited upon her husband. Nicol is a very funny writer.

White

Graham Greene. The Heart of the Matter

Guinea

Black

Camara Laye. The Dark Child (Farrar, Straus & Girous) See above.

_____. The Radiance of the King (Fontana)

The reverse of Saul Bellow's Henderson the Rain King. A white man seeks renewal for his inner gnawings. Henderson's odyssey is into symbolic dark primitive Africa. He contacts nature by riding the underbelly of a lion to overcome fear. Clarence is drawn into African life in a Kafkesque manner until he experiences physical fulfilment, renewal, and socialization in new dimensions.

_____. A Dream of Africa Useful for Political Science studies.

Senegal and Mali

Ousmene Sembene. God's Bits of Wood Revolt of workers against colonists.

Yambo Ouologuen. Bound to Violence

Prose epic of Africa's past up to modern times. Plagiarisms from Swartz-Bart, Graham Greene, and others. Sardonic about man's inhumanity to man.

L. S. Senghor. Nocturnes (poems) Former President of Senegal.

Selected References as Adjuncts to the Literature

Architecture

Rene Gardi. Indigenous African Architecture (Van Nostrom Rheinhold)

Art

Thurston Shaw. Igbo-Ukwu Excavations (Northwestern UP)

Maude Wahlman. Contemporary African Arts and Crafts (Field Museum) Excellent

_____. Ceremonial Art of West Africa (Michigan State U)

_____. Traditional Art of West Africa (Colby Co-lege)

Professor Wahlman travelled in most African countries under grants and for the Field Museum to co-lect for their exhibits and shop; she mounted two African Art traveling exhibits. Presently at the University of Mississippi in the Art Department and the Center for Southern Culture, she is writing two books on Southern Folk Art.

Frank Willett. African Art

Bibliography

Modern Languages Association under the Division on African Literature

Don Herdeck, et. al. eds. African Authors (Three Continents Press)

Bernth Lindfors, ed. Black African Literature in English (Gale) Useful.

Biography/Autobiography

Don Herdeck, et. al. eds. African Authors (Three Continents Press)

Wole Soyinka. The Man Died.

Criticism

O. R. Dathorne. The Black Mind (University of Minnesota)

Good overall reference. Obtainable. He lectured several years in Africa, the U.S.A., and the Caribbean. He judges the African works alongside universal western lines of literary criticism while he presents the background and circumstances in which the literary works are written.

Charles Larson. The Emergence of African Fiction

Margaret Laurence. Long Drums and Cannons (Macmillan)

Gerald Moore. Seven African Writers

Emmanuel Obiechina. Culture, Tradition, and Society in the West African Novel

James Olney. Tell me Africa (Princeton UP) Autobiographical approach

Periodicals

Ba Shiru (University of Wisconsin)

Research in African Literatures (University of Texas at Austin Press)

Drama

Black Orpheus (Ibadan University Press)

Festivals of Ghana (Ghanaian Government Publication)

French and Portuguese

Donald Burness. Fire. Six Writers from Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde (Three Continents Press, Washington) Excellent

History

Michael Crowder. Nigeria

Colin Legum. Africa: A Handbook to the Continent (Praeger)

Franz Fanon. Studies in a Dying Colonialism

Western educated black psychiatrist who turns from his western training to see what Arabs have gone through. He recognizes that blacks in Martinique have gone through similar stages in freeing themselves from colonials.

Mawal El Saadawi. The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World Trans. and ed. by Dr. Sherif Hetata. (Zed Press, London)

Mona N. Mikhail. Images of Arab Women: Fact and Fiction. Four Maghribine Folktales (Three Continents Press)

Language

Ihechukwu Madubuike. A Handbook of African Names (Three Continents Press)

Modupe Oduyoye. Yoruba Names. Their Structure and Their Meanings (IUP)

Oral Literature

Richard Dorson, ed. African Folktales (Doubleday Anchor)

Ruth Finnegan. Oral Literature in Africa (OUP)

Oral Literature, continued,

Jan Knappert. Myths and Legends of the Swahili (Heinemann)

Bernth Lindfors. Folklore in Nigerian Literature (Africana Publishing Co.)

_____. Forms of Folklore in Africa (University of Texas at Austin)

Oyekan Owomoyela. African Literatures: An Introduction (Crossroads Press)

Religion/Philosophy

Newell S. Booth, ed. African Religions: A Symposium (NOK Publishers)

Edmund Ilogu. Christianity and Igbo Culture. A Study of the Interaction of Christianity and Igbo Culture (NOK Publishers)

Geoffrey Parrinder. Religions in Africa (Epworth)

Associations

African Literature Association

Begun in 1974 at the University of Texas at Austin. Open to scholars, teachers, and writers from every country. Facilitates a world-wide audience to appreciate the creative efforts of African writers and artists. The ALA Newsletter is published four times a year. Membership is $125US for Regular members. Apply to President Thomas A. Hale, Department of French, 316 Burrowes Building, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania 16802; phone (814) 865-1978, or (814) 865-1492.

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Apply to the Executive Secretary, African Studies Association, 255 Kinsey Hall, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90024. ASA Newsletter and ASA Review of Books are also published.

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